

Minutes

Talbot County Board of Elections
215 Bay Street
Easton, MD 21601
December 14, 2022

Attendance

Board Members Present

Joseph Secrist, President	(R)
Walter Black	(D)
Richard Bulman	(R)
Wadella Thomas	(R)
Susan MacKinnon	(D)

Staff

Tamara Stafford, Talbot County Election Director

Board Attorney

Lyndsey Ryan

Public

Maryann Judy
Gary Judy
Mark Harrison

The monthly meeting of the Talbot County Board of Elections was held December 14, 2022 in Conference Room # Two at the Board office indicated above. The meeting was moved from Conference Room # 3 due to space limitations. County staff were available to redirect members of the public who wished to attend. Mr. Secrist called the meeting to order at 9:30 AM and noted that a quorum was present.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Secrist asked if the Board had any corrections or additions to the minutes of the meetings of November 16, 2022 and November 30, 2022, copies of which had been forwarded to the Board Members in advance of the meeting. Mr. Bulman moved to approve both sets of minutes. Mr. Black seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Addition/Changes to the Agenda

Mr. Secrist asked for any additions or changes to the agenda as presented. Ms. MacKinnon moved that the agenda be approved as presented. Ms. Thomas seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

Public Comments

Ms. Maryann Judy said she, Mr. Judy and Mr. Harrison are present to observe the meeting. Their interest is voter integrity. She asked how to obtain Election Board reports and she inquired as to the systems used by the Talbot County Board. Ms. Stafford provided responses in part and offered to further research responses. She suggested that they feel free to contact her directly if they have further questions.

Election Director's Report

Ms. Stafford introduced herself to the Board and public. She noted that this was her first day as Talbot County Election Director and thanked the Board for the opportunity to serve as Election Director. Individual Board Members welcomed her to her new position.

Ms. Stafford provided the Board with a written report on staff activities since the last monthly Board Meeting. A copy of her report is attached to these minutes. She supplemented her report with the following:

- She intends to make an appointment to meet with and introduce herself to the County Manager in her new position.
- She advised the Board of her leave plans.
- An Election Judge had to be dismissed for cause during the Gubernatorial Election.
- Tilghman Island Fire Department met the previous night to discuss how to respond to our offer regarding repairs to the fire station caused during the election. No report has been provided to the Election Board staff as a result of that meeting.

Board Attorney's Report

Ms. Ryan reported that there has been no movement on the law suit filed regarding the Presidential Election.

Old Business

- A. Facility for Election Office - There have been no updates since the last monthly meeting of the Board. Ms. Stafford noted that the building where our warehouse is located must be vacated by April 2024 and any relocation from that location must include recognition that the Presidential Primary will be held that month.

Discussion then ensued regarding the need for action by the newly elected County Council on a decision for space to the Board activities. In addition to informing the new County Council members about our space needs, the Board should also seek time on a Council agenda to introduce our new Election Director. Ms. MacKinnon moved that the Board hold a work session at 9:30 AM on December 28, 2022 to prepare a presentation to the County Council to introduce our new Election Director, to discuss with the Council our space needs and stress the urgency of a decision on this matter. Mr. Black seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

- B. Budget FY 2023 - Ms. Stafford provided reports on expenditures recorded through November. She responded to questions from Board Members regarding expenditures.
- C. Review of Invoices – In response to questions raised at the November Board Meeting regarding the various subparts of the invoice for equipment lease from the State Board, Ms. Stafford provided a summary tabulation of the expenses charged to the county in connection with the actual lease of equipment. Mr. Secrist asked for a more refined itemization of the expenditures so they can be accounted for more accurately. Several Board Members noted that there was a greater than anticipated request by voters in the recent election to use the Ballot Marking Devices. They suggested that we ask the state for more devices for future elections.
- D. County Bulletins – Copies of County Bulletins for November 18, 2022 and December 2, 2022 were previously provided to Board Members. There were no questions from Board Members.

New Business

- A. Budget FY2024 – Ms. Stafford provided a draft proposed budget to Board Members for comment and input. She will be refining her proposal and provide her final recommendation to the Board for action at its January 2023 meeting.
- B. Tilghman Fire House Repair – Ms. Stafford reported on this item in her earlier report to the Board.
- C. Additional Staff Position – Board Members have been discussing the need for an additional senior position on the staff. Previously, the Board sought information regarding the process to obtain approval for the position of Election Program Manager II from the state Human Resources Director. Board Members expressed the desire to include this position in the proposed budget for FY2024.

D. Review of Election – Ms. Stafford provided the following statistics:

Talbot had a 62.9% turnout rate
4,724 mail-in ballots were requested
4,229 mail-in ballots were returned

She also noted that combining Chief and Provisional Judge positions caused issues and should not be done in the future. She also noted some staffing issues and improvements need in the training areas. She has already seen some opportunities to be more proactive in recruiting. The use of a telephone answering service will not be repeated in the next election.

Confirmation of next meeting

Mr. Secrist noted that the next regular monthly meeting will be Wednesday, January 18, 2023 at 9:30 AM. There will be a work session at 9:30 AM on Wednesday, December 28, 2022.

Board of Canvassers meeting

The Board of Elections convened as the Board of Canvassers at 11:02 AM to consider the following:

A. Approval of canvass minutes for General Election

Ms. Stafford presented draft minutes for the Board of Canvassers meetings of October 25, 2022, November 10, 2022, November 16, 2022 and November 18, 2022. Ms. MacKinnon moved approval of these minutes as presented. Mr. Black seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

B. Present ballots for review from General Election

Ms. Stafford presented 5 unopened mail-in ballots to the Board which were received after certification of results and recommended they be rejected for the reason they were received late. Mr. Black moved they be rejected for the reason they were not received in a timely manner. Ms. Thomas seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

This concluded the meeting of the Board of Canvassers at 11:12 AM.

Closed Session

Ms. MacKinnon moved that the Board go into closed session for the purpose of discussing personnel matters that affect one or more specific individuals as permitted under General Provisions Art. 3-305(b) (1). Ms. Thomas seconded the motion. It passed unanimously. Whereupon the Board went into closed session at 11:12 AM.

Present at this session were Board Members Mr. Secrist, Mr. Black, Ms. Thomas, Ms. MacKinnon and Mr. Bulman. Also present were Board Attorney Lyndsey Ryan and Election Director Tamara Stafford. Members of the public departed the meeting at this point.

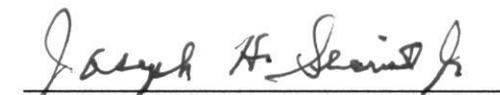
At 11:36 AM. the Board returned to open session. President Secrist reported that the Board discussed the procedure for evaluating the Election Director and deferred action on the evaluation to the next monthly Board Meeting. The Board approved the minutes for the Closed meetings of November 2, 2022 and November 30, 2022.

Adjournment

Mr. Black moved adjournment of the meeting. Ms. Thomas seconded the motion. It passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 11:37 AM.

Attested,

Respectfully submitted,



Joseph H. Secrist, Jr., President



Richard B. Bulman, Secretary